



*Amendments to the Claims*

1. (Currently Amended) A substantially purified nucleic acid molecule that encodes a maize protein or fragment thereof comprising a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or its complement.

2-7 (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A substantially purified nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or its complement.

9. (Currently Amended) The substantially purified nucleic acid molecule according to claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid molecule consists of a nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or its complement.

10. (Currently Amended) A substantially purified first nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment from about 50 to about 100 nucleotide residues, wherein said fragment exhibits complete complementarity to a second nucleic acid molecule having a nucleic acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 and [[a]] its complement thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) The substantially purified first nucleic acid molecule according to claim 10, ~~where~~ wherein said first nucleic acid molecule consists of said fragment.

12. (Previously Presented) The substantially purified first nucleic acid molecule according to claim 10, wherein said substantially purified nucleic acid molecule further comprises a region having a single nucleotide polymorphism.

13. (Currently Amended) A substantially purified nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment nucleic acid molecule, wherein said fragment consists of about 50

to about 100 nucleotide residues of the nucleic acid molecule of SEQ ID NO: 1 or its complement.